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(54) Title: **PROGRAMMABLE NETWORK DEVICE**

(57) Abstract: A programmable network device is described. The programmable network device executes software modules resident on its hardware to support assorted applications and network management services. These modules may be dynamically loaded, unloaded, or modified without interrupting network traffic routed through the device. The loading and unloading of modules can be administered remotely, via a network backbone, service provider network, LAN, or other internetwork coupled to the device. Alternatively, administrators may alter the operating parameters of individual management modules via the network to effect performance gains or modify existing operating parameters.

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